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AFGHANISTAN

SNAPSHOT

Rolling Out Red Carpet For Exports

Afghan carpet export growth and potential facilitated by new Carpet Sector Action Plan addressing industry constraints.



Kabir and Hamed Rauf show off one of their new designs.

Afghanistan's carpet exports are up - 30% higher in 2013 compared to the previous year – and there's an ambitious strategy in place to build on the success.

The action plan, which covers a three-year period to September 2016, was produced by the Ministry of Commerce and Industries with technical support from USAID. It incorporates the views of all stakeholders, including suppliers, weavers, traders, transporters and international donors. It offers “practical solutions” to real problems, says Deputy Minister Motasil Komaki says.

One of the biggest problems is transportation costs. Hamed Rauf, who runs his family's carpet business, says he is encouraged by recent progress in negotiating lower land transport costs to Turkey and beyond. The new deal offers the added advantage of reducing the time taken to deliver an Afghan carpet to customers in Europe and North America, which is a boon to a sector that has typically relied on slower shipments from Karachi.

Esmatullah Bator, head of Afghanistan's Carpet Guild, says the plan is timely. “We need to take advantage of the current surge in the world market and the first thing we need to do at home is improve systems and services that support the industry.”